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Public Affairs, Roger Williams University

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# Student Team Leads Brand Coventry Campaign to Promote Town's History, Community

Via the Community Partnerships Center, a team of public relations students partner with Celebrate Coventry! Committee to promote the Town as tourist destination



RWU students – Anderson James, Michelle Ryder and Alissa McGeehan lead the Celebrate Coventry press conference with committee members and officials from the town.

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**Coventry, R.I.** – For their media relations course this spring with Assistant Professor Hume Johnson, the students – Alissa McGeehan, Anderson James and Michelle Ryder – did not lead mock press events or create strategic plans for pretend crisis scenarios, but instead served a real client by partnering with the City of Coventry to launch a rebranding campaign for the town.

Through the Community Partnerships Center, town leaders of the “Celebrate Coventry!” committee began collaborating with the students in January. After conducting research, touring the Town and meeting with local community members, the students created a strategic media plan with ideas on how the town could promote tourism and community involvement by planning new events, increasing the committee’s use of social media and securing positive media coverage on the Town’s cultural history and thriving businesses.

“Part of our goal on the committee is to create community events for our residents but also share what’s great about the Town beyond our borders,” says Celebrate Coventry! Committee Chairperson Norma Smith. “With the students help, we’d like to attract more area residents to our community events to help support the small businesses in the Town and also attract more businesses to Coventry.”

Throughout the semester, the students crafted press materials, identified story ideas, pitched news to local media outlets and created a crisis communications plan for the Town, among other projects, all of which will now serve as the foundation for the Committee’s rebranding campaign. Local residents in Coventry have also noticed the students’ work securing media coverage and reviving the Committee’s social media channels.

“We’ve had a wonderful experience with Professor Johnson and the students this semester,” says Karen Carlson, Coventry Town Council Member, District 1. “In just a few months time, we’ve had more press coverage in our local newspaper and they’ve been instrumental in growing our social media channels and engaging with important community partners like the police department and our schools.”

All three students that led the branding campaign believe the hands-on work and collaboration with a real client will prove valuable as they enter their careers in public relations.

“This class has provided us the necessary tools to be able to pitch stories to the media on behalf of our client and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between us and reporters. Being able to speak with real members of the media has allowed us to develop practical communication techniques to use throughout our careers,” says McGeehan.

Check out the video below created by Professor Johnson and the students which summarizes the Brand Coventry campaign.

**Celebrate Coventry !**

